

Dear Commissioners -

I'm sorry I can't be there tonight to speak with you in person. Unfortunately, my day job requires me to be out of state. I would like to comment on two items on your agenda. I apologize in advance for the length of my comments.

First, I understand you will discuss and possibly approve, a design for the Warner Park path resurfacing/relocation project. Based on the public input we have received, I have requested that staff prepare two options for your consideration - one that is supported by Parks staff, and one that is responsive to neighborhood comments. If you do not have two options before you, please refer the matter until you do.

There are several issues that have been raised with respect to this project:

- a) The need to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic within and through the park to as many destinations as possible. To that end, I have discussed with Tony Fernandez from Engineering where I feel the "missing links" are, and asked him to address these as much as possible. A notable gap is between the Center and the Shelter.
- b) The need to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and bicycles. While I initially opposed widening some of the paths, I understand that this will help reduce the first type of conflict, and now support doing so.
- c) The need to reduce conflicts between through-traffic and events. I believe that moving the "main" path, intended for bicycle use, away from the shelter and as far to the east (towards the parking lot and stadium) as possible, while maintaining the existing pedestrian path near to the lake will best accomplish that. Care must be taken not to divide the "ice rink" area while doing this. This solution has the benefit of closing the gap between the shelter and the center for pedestrians.
- d) The conflicting desires regarding the existing bridges. I understand that Parks staff does not want to maintain the existing bridges and would prefer to replace them with a lower-maintenance model. However, many of my constituents have expressed a strong desire to keep one or both of the bridges, for aesthetic, sentimental, wildlife habitat, and recreational reasons. They feel, and I agree, that there should continue to be a pedestrian path that follows the edge of the lagoon and crosses these two bridges.
- e) The desire to impact as few trees as possible. I believe there is agreement here, but add it to the list because it of concern to many of my constituents.

As you can see, most of the issues are around the area between the center and the shelter. I believe there is broad agreement on the rest of the project as proposed. I urge you to support a solution that reduces conflicts around the shelter and preserves both (or at least one of) the existing bridges.

Second, you have before you an ordinance that will increase the options for Madisonians to plant and harvest their own food. This would allow,

with a permit, individuals and groups to plant, maintain and harvest edible landscapes on City-owned lands, including Parks. Permits would be issued by the Superintendent of Parks or his/her designee. The standards for permits, and the requirements of permittees, are quite reasonable while protecting the City and our Parks. There is no fee or insurance required of permittees, in order to keep this option accessible to individuals and groups at all income levels. This process is not intended to replace or compete with the Community Garden process; it is intended to allow the planting of perennial species that are not appropriate for community gardens.

I am working with the City Attorney's office and the other co-sponsors on a substitute ordinance amendment that will address issues raised by the Board of Public Works and the Food Policy Council. Changes will include the following:

- a) Changing the responsibility for granting permits from the Office of Real Estate Services to the relevant department or division head. The Food and Alcohol Policy Coordinator will develop a permitting system and criteria for reviewing permits so this is standard across departments and easy for the public to access.
- b) Changing the length of permits from 1 year to 5 to parallel the lease time for community gardens.
- c) A requirement to notify the alder and neighborhood association when an application is made.
- d) A requirement to follow the planting plan and confine vegetation to the permitted area.
- e) Clarifying that fruits, nuts or other produce grown on city lands may not be sold.
- f) Requiring that the permittee to be notified if a permit is to be revoked or not renewed, and allowing appeal of such decisions to the appropriate committee - in Parks the appeals would come to you.

I invite your comments, thoughts and possible amendments, on the issues above and any others you see, and I urge your support of the ordinance amendment.

Thank you very much for your time and attention, and for your service.

Sincerely,
Satya Rhodes-Conway
Alder, District 12